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ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

PAKISTAN PENALISES PLAYERS FOR EXITING T20 WC IN SUPER 8s?

According to reports in the country, the Pakistan Cricket Board has slapped huge penalty on each of the cricketers part of the campaign

FINED $18,000 EACH FOR POOR PERFORMANCE

Not just the PCB, even some top govt functionaries were apparently unhappy with the team's performance. If confirmed, this would be the first time a team would face such a penalty for exiting World Cup. Pak lost to India but somehow managed to reach the Super 8s where they succumbed to England after their match against New Zealand was rained off

EYES ON THE TWO BIG SEMIFINALS

- India will play England in the 2nd semifinal in Mumbai on Thursday. South Africa & New Zealand will play the first one on Wednesday
- PCB had earlier suspended all No Objection Certificates for their players playing at various T20 leagues after the team's loss against India in the final of the Asia Cup | **P17**

5 million

PAKISTAN RUPEES IS THE FINE APPARENTLY SLAPPED ON PLAYERS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

ARAMCO OIL REFINERY HIT

Saudi Aramco shut down its Ras Tanura oil refinery near Dammam on Monday after it was hit by Iran. Earlier, debris fell on Kuwait's Ahmadi oil refinery, injuring two

HUGE SPIKE IN GAS FUTURES

European natural gas futures spiked 42% as Qatar stopped production of LNG after two attacks on Ras Laffan and Mesaieed fields. Qatar snapped ties with Iran

U.S. BOOTS ON GROUND NOT RULED OUT

At least 555 killed in Iran, 11 in Israel as West Asia war rages on; Gulf allies bear the brunt; EU nations try to evacuate their residents

AGENCIES @ Tehran, Tel Aviv, Dubai

THE war launched by the United States and Israel against Iran spread across West Asia and beyond on Monday, with Lebanon's Hezbollah entering the fray and a British air base in Cyprus targeted.

The Israeli military said it began new strikes on Tehran, as first responders heard explosions ring out on the third day of the US-Israeli joint assault and blasts rocked Lebanon's capital Beirut.

Gulf monarchies threatened to retaliate as a Saudi oil refinery burned, Qatar halted LNG production, tankers were attacked off Oman and energy prices soared.

President Donald Trump said he was not ruling out sending US troops into Iran, while admitting that the war could drag on for "four to five weeks, or longer". The intensity of the attacks and the lack of any exit plan means a prolonged conflict. The chaos became apparent when the US said Kuwait, an ally, had "mistakenly shot down" three American F-15Es. The US said all six pilots ejected safely.

It however, confirmed that four of its troops were killed.

Black smoke rose from the US embassy complex in Kuwait as Iran pressed on with attacks it launched in retaliation for the US-Israeli hits that killed its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Its top security official Ali Larijani said: "We won't negotiate with US."

The toll grew on all sides. Iranian Red Crescent Society said the US-Israeli hits killed at least 555 people. In Israel, 11 were killed in Iranian hits.

Urging restraint, UK PM Keir Starmer said Iran's approach is "reckless". **P14**

AIRSPACE OPENS

- 3 US F-15Es shot in Kuwait in friendly fire
- Wife of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei too killed
- Hezbollah faces Lebanon ban after attack on Israel, IDF kills Hezbollah intel chief
- US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth says no timeline to end hostilities
- First flight from Dubai carrying Indians touches base in New Delhi
- Trump says US yet to launch its biggest strike

Flames and smoke rise from Israeli airstrikes on Dahiyeh, a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, on Monday | AP/PTI

Frenetic Modi diplomacy for de-escalation in Wasia

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi spoke with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and other Gulf leaders on Monday as West Asia plunged deeper into crisis following the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a joint US-Israeli strike and Tehran's sweeping retaliation.

In his call with Netanyahu, Modi conveyed India's concern over the spiralling conflict and pressed for an immediate cessation of hostilities. "Conveyed India's concerns over recent developments and emphasised the safety of civilians as a priority. India reiterates the need for an early cessation of hostilities," Modi posted on X.

The conversation came hours after Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review the situation and assess contingency plans for Indian nationals in the region.

During his conversation with Mohammed bin Salman, who also serves as Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Modi agreed that the "earliest restoration of regional peace and stability is of utmost importance." He condemned attacks targeting Saudi territory and reiterated India's solidarity. A similar message was conveyed to Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of Bahrain. He also spoke with Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE President, condemning attacks and calling for de-escalation through talks and diplomacy.

Indian sailor dies in attack

An Indian sailor was killed after an explosives-laden unmanned boat struck oil tanker MV MKD Vyom off the coast of Oman's Muscat Governorate | **P11**

(From left) Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, The New Indian Express Editor Santwana Bhattacharya, CEO Lakshmi Menon, Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla (right) and Rajalakshmi Engineering College Vice Chairman Abhay Meganathan during the inauguration of the 14th edition of the ThinkEdu Conclave, in Chennai on Monday | P RAVIKUMAR

TNIE conclave spotlights AI, ambitions and self-reliance

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

POLICYMAKERS, academicians, industry leaders, artists, and public figures came together to discuss issues ranging from artificial intelligence and semiconductors to diplomacy, culture, sustainability, and role of education in India on the first day of the ThinkEdu Conclave 2026 held in Chennai on Monday.

Delivering the inaugural address at the event presented by Tata Group and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) with Rajalakshmi Group of Institutions as title sponsor, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi underscored the importance of education and AI adoption in India's development journey.

"AI is a transformative technology that empowers individuals and nations," Ravi said, adding that India must develop its own domain-specific AI models instead of merely replicating the high-energy-consuming Silicon Valley models.

Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria (Retd), former Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, and Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan (Retd) discussed how defence preparedness and diplomatic engagement must work together in navigating an increasingly complex global order.

Additional Chief Secretary Supriya Sahu and Tata Motors CSO Jyotin Kutty Sastabhavan underscored the role played by communities, businesses, and governments in protecting local ecosystems.

Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor, during his conversation with senior journalist Kaveree Bamzai, predicted a bright prospect for the Congress in Kerala, and stressed on the importance of liberal values and education.

Actor Khushbu Sundar and filmmaker G Dhananjheyan discussed cinema's political influence, contrasting digital popularity with electoral legitimacy.

CPM Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas contended that right-wing rhetoric on education does not match ground realities, citing stark contrasts in school dropout figures between Gujarat, Chennai, and Kerala.

Smriti Z Irani, former Union Minister, said that India's future lies in science, underscoring the need for women's economic empowerment and greater private investment in research.

The event began with Saraswati Vandana by Shreya Ramnath and rendition of devotional songs by students from the Rajalakshmi Group of Institutions.

Welcoming the gathering, Prabhu Chawla, editorial director of *TNIE*, lauded the ThinkEdu Conclave 2026 as a global hub of ideas since its inception in 2012.

Over 250 students took part on the first day of the conclave.

The journey of human civilisation has always been on the back of technology. Becoming a developed nation by the centenary of Independence is not merely an aspiration but a necessity

RN Ravi, TN Governor

Aim is to release comprehensive human brain maps that can serve as a global reference in neuroanatomy. More than 100 human brains are being mapped now

Dr Mohanasankar, IIT-M professor

INSIDE Israel-Iran war reflects US strategy: Tharoor; Tech key to Viksit Bharat: RN Ravi | P7

Small N-reactors in your town? It could be reality soon

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Kaiga

THE Atomic Energy Commission of India and the Department of Atomic Energy have said they will come out with modular reactors that will enable production of nuclear and clean energy on a small scale to meet requirements at the local level. These reactors that can be set up in small towns will ensure decentralisation of power generation and minimise distribution losses.

Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman, AEC and Secretary, DAE, told *TNIE* that these are light water reactors. "They will use enriched uranium and we have the choice of generating power as low as 55 megawatt. Such reactors can be set up in any city or town. The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre will develop these reactors."

He said research to develop such reactors has been going on in Russia and India. Asked whether there is any town where such a reactor is going to be set up, he said that such projects will be taken up in Tarapore and other places. "Land is available in Tarapore. We will start there and develop such reactors wherever required," he said.

These modular reactors require minuscule investment as compared to massive power plants. While power plants with capacities of 200-300 mw are considered small modular reactors by the International Atomic Energy Agency, these reactors can be scaled up from 55 mw, he said. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

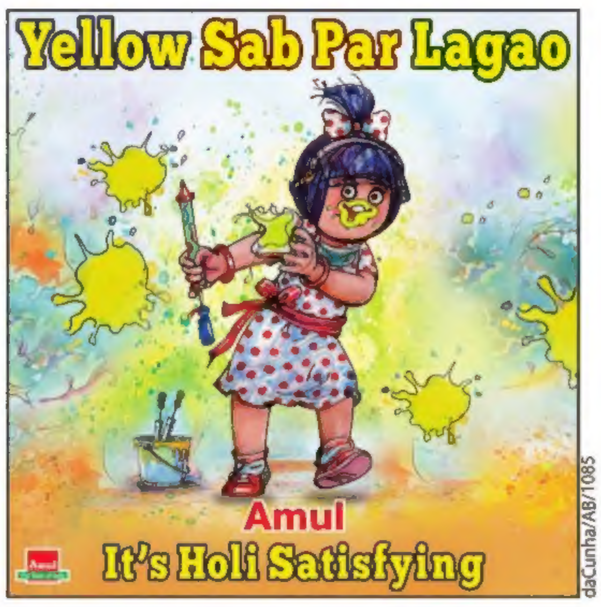
EXPRESS READ

2,600 evacuated after gas leak near Mumbai

Mumbai: Over 2,600 people, including 1,600 school students, were evacuated following a massive leak of oleum gas at a chemical unit in Palghar district of Maharashtra on Monday. The leak, which occurred around 2 pm on Mumbai's outskirts, created a dense cloud of white fumes that spread rapidly due to wind velocity.

TDB to challenge Sabari women entry

T'Puram: Indicating a shift in the official position, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has decided to file an affidavit in the Supreme Court (SC) opposing the entry of women of menstruating age into the Sabarimala hill shrine. The move comes nearly eight years after the apex court in 2018 lifted the entry ban on women in the 10-50 age group.



daCunha/AB/1085

India-Canada ties rebound, $2.6-bn uranium deal done

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Canada on Monday signed a $2.6-billion long-term uranium supply agreement and a pact on critical minerals, marking a significant rebound in bilateral relations after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney.

The agreements were part of a broader agenda that includes a new India-Canada Defence Dialogue and a commitment to concluding a comprehensive economic partnership by 2026, aiming to raise bilateral trade to $50 billion by 2030.

FTA in the works

India and Canada have launched negotiations for a free trade agreement, officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Talks will cover trade in goods, services and other mutually agreed policy areas. The pact is expected to be finalised soon, officials said

The reset comes after years of strained relations under former Canadian PM Justin Trudeau.

Addressing the media, Modi described the day as an "important milestone" and said "since our first meeting, our relationship has been infused with new energy, mutual trust, and positivity. India and Canada share an unwavering belief in democratic values... Today, we discussed transforming this vision into a Next Level Partnership."

He highlighted Canada's $100 billion investment in Indian markets as a strong indicator of confidence in India's growth trajectory.

The two leaders also focused on critical minerals, with Modi noting the pact will "strengthen resilient supply chains" and support technological and industrial collaboration. In defence, both sides agreed to expand cooperation, including maritime domain awareness, military exchanges, and enhanced defence industries.

"We will work to enhance defence industries, maritime domain awareness, and military exchanges. To this end, we have decided to establish the India-Canada Defence Dialogue," Modi said, underlining deep mutual trust.

Carney described the agreements as "not merely the renewal of a relationship, but the expansion of a valued partnership with new ambition, focus and foresight... a partnership between two confident countries charting our own course for the future." Beyond energy and defence, the leaders pledged collaboration in technology, innovation, and education. Modi highlighted partnerships connecting startups, universities, and research institutes in AI, healthcare, agriculture, quantum computing, supercomputing, and semiconductors.

KARNATAKA BEGINS BACKGROUND WORK FOR SIR, 73.2% VOTERS MAPPED

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Karnataka, has begun the background work for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), mapping 4.08 crore of the total 5.57 crore voters, which constitutes 73.2% of the total electorate.

According to data from the CEO, the mapping was most extensive in Tumakuru (92.05%), followed by Koppal (91.32%) and Udupi (90.12%). The lowest was in the BBMP South constituency (34.22%), followed by the BBMP Central constituency (34.79%).

"We are ready to start the SIR process as soon as the Election Commission of India directs us. The exercise in Karnataka is likely to start from April and work in the background is going on," sources in the election commission told *The New Indian Express*.

At the same time, the State Election Commission (SEC) is working on finalising the electoral rolls for elections to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). SEC officials said, "We are not involved in SIR. We are working on extending the date from April 6 for the final electoral rolls for GBA elections. This is being done to accommodate the SIR exercise as Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and other staffers will be busy."

To maintain accuracy, they are comparing electors in the 2025 electoral rolls with that of 2002 to identify additions through progenies. This is to track the dead, those who have shifted or duplicate voters, the officials explained.

"Mapping is a table-top exercise, wherein staffers use the 2002 data as the base for verification. The annual Special Summary Revision (SSR) data is also used to ascertain voters' details," an electoral officer said. **P4**

If a person continues to be in the same constituency since 2002, then no additional verification is needed. But if one was not present in the 2002 rolls and was found in 2025, then verification has to be done

— Electoral officer